

LEARN Partners for Birth to Three

February 18, 2010

Senator Harp and Representative Geragosian

My name is Catherine O'Brien, Director of LEARN Partners for Birth to Three.

First, many thanks to this committee and members of the legislature for their support of the Birth to Three program. I am writing today in support of the Governor's proposed budget and ask that once again you support her recommended appropriation.

I would like to share with you some data that demonstrates that Birth to Three continues to be a cost effective investment of state funds. For example:

Birth to Three is a program that makes a tremendous impact on infants, toddlers and their families and saves the state significant long-term costs. Every \$1 spent on Birth to Three saves \$10 in Special Education costs down the line.

Data from the State Department of education indicates that of all the children who received Birth to Three services **65% did not** require special education by kindergarten.

Over 90 % of all children who exited Birth to Three, and received at least 6 months of intervention, improved to age level or near age level in social-emotional development, early language and early literacy skills.

The recommendation in the Governor's budget to remove the 10% retention incentive for programs to bill insurance companies creates a major disincentive for providers to invest time and resources into maximizing insurance reimbursements. We suggest that any change in insurance billing practices be delayed until the contracts are renewed at the end of FY11.

Also, recommended is a consistent and fair process for making referrals to all programs, focusing on efficient and cost effective means of delivering Birth to Three Services.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine O'Brien
Director Birth to Three, LEARN